

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 187018 TOSEC 080211
ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 CCO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA:HCOLLUMS:TH
APPROVED BY NEA:NAVELIOTES
S/S-O:JETHYDEN

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O 090111Z AUG 77 ZFF5
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
INFO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, US, PLO

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S REMARKS ON PALESTINIANS

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF PRESIDENT'S REMARKS TO PRESS
MORNING OF AUGUST 8:

BEGIN TEXT:

QUESTION: THERE IS SOME ENCOURAGING NEWS OUT OF THE MIDDLE
EAST THIS MORNING. ANY COMMENT ON THE REPORTS OF THE PLO?

THE PRESIDENT: NO. WE DON'T KNOW YET WHAT IS GOING TO
HAPPEN. UNTIL I GET A COMPLETE REPORT FROM CY VANCE--I
GET A MESSAGE FROM HIM EVERY NIGHT AND THEN A BRIEFING
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EVERY MORNING. IF THE PALESTINIANS WILL RECOGNIZE THE
APPLICABILITY OF THE UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION 242, THEN
IT WOULD OPEN UP A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO START DIS-
CUSSIONS WITH THEM AND ALSO OPEN UP AN AVENUE THAT THEY
MIGHT PARTICIPATE IN THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. BUT WHETHER
THEY WILL DO THAT, WE DON'T KNOW YET.

QUESTION: IF INDEED THEY DO RECOGNIZE 242 WOULDN'T THAT MORE OR LESS ASSURE THAT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WILL INDEED BEGIN?

THE PRESIDENT: I CAN'T ANSWER THAT QUESTION BECAUSE THERE MIGHT BE OTHER OBSTACLES TO IT. BUT I THINK I CAN BE ABLE TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION WHEN SECRETARY VANCE GETS BACK. HE HAS NOW DECIDED, I THINK, TO TALK WITH SOME OF THE LEADERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. SO THIS MIGHT BE AN ENCOURAGING SIGN.

QUESTION: TO GO BACK TO THE OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES AGAIN?

THE PRESIDENT: EITHER DOUBLE BACK OR HAVE ADDITIONAL CONVERSATIONS WITH THEM BEFORE HE LEAVES THE MIDDLE EAST. HE IS GOING TO STAY OVER IN LONDON AN EXTRA DAY TO TALK TO PRESIDENT NYERERE ABOUT RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA. SO, I THINK THINGS LOOK BETTER THAN THEY DID. I HOPE WE CAN WORK SOMETHING OUT ON THE PALESTINIANS. THAT IS THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE RIGHT NOW.

QUESTION: WE ALWAYS ASK YOU ABOUT THE NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS. WE HAVE GIVEN YOU A CHANCE TO TALK ABOUT A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT FOR A CHANGE.

THE PRESIDENT: THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
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QUESTION: WHAT ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR A GENEVA CONFERENCE IN OCTOBER? STILL GOOD?

THE PRESIDENT: WELL, I WOULD SAY THEY ARE ABOUT THE SAME AS THEY WERE. THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE THAT WE HAVE DETECTED, OF COURSE, IS WHETHER OR NOT THE PALESTINIANS WOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE DISCUSSIONS. OUR POSITION HAS BEEN THAT UNTIL THE PALESTINIANS AND THEIR LEADERS RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST THAT WE WOULD NOT HAVE CONVERSATIONS WITH THEM OURSELVES.

SO, IF THE PALESTINIANS DO ADOPT AS A BASIS FOR THE DISCUSSIONS A UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION 242 AND 338, THEN THAT WOULD CERTAINLY MAKE IT EASIER TO GO --

QUESTION: HAVE YOU HAD ANY CONTACT WITH THE PALESTINIANS, FORMALLY, INFORMALLY TO INDICATE THEIR POSITION?

THE PRESIDENT: I THINK A BETTER WORD WOULD BE INDIRECTLY. WE HAVE NOT HAD ANY DIRECT CONVERSATIONS WITH THEM. BUT, OF COURSE, THEY ARE SENDING US MESSAGES THROUGH THE

SYRIANS, THE SAUDI ARABIANS, THE JORDANIANS AND THE EGYPTIANS.

SO, WE HAVE A MEANS TO CONTACT THEM AND TO EXCHANGE IDEAS WITH THEM INDIRECTLY. BUT WE ARE NOT GOING TO MEET WITH

THE PALESTINIAN LEADERS AS LONG AS THEY ARE COMMITTED TO THE DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL.

QUESTION: WHAT WERE THEY SAYING, INDIRECTLY?

THE PRESIDENT: THAT THEY MAY ADOPT UN RESOLUTION 242 WHICH DOES RECOGNIZE ISRAEL, ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST PERMANENTLY AND IN PEACE WITH SECURED BORDERS.
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THE THING THAT HAS MADE THE PALESTINIANS RELUCTANT TO DO THIS WAS AT THE TIME 242 WAS PASSED, IT ONLY REFERRED TO PALESTINIANS AS REFUGEES. IF THE PALESTINIANS SHOULD SAY, "WE RECOGNIZE UN RESOLUTION 242 IN ITS ENTIRETY; BUT WE THINK THE PALESTINIANS HAVE ADDITIONAL STATUS OTHER THAN JUST REFUGEES," THAT WOULD SUIT US OKAY.

QUESTION: ANYTHING ON YOUR SCHEDULE TODAY, SOFTBALL AGAIN MAYBE?

THE PRESIDENT: MAYBE. I DON'T KNOW YET.

QUESTION: HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

THE PRESIDENT: I FEEL FINE. BILLY IS IN PRETTY BAD SHAPE THIS MORNING.

QUESTION: YOU ARE NOT STIFF?

THE PRESIDENT: NO, I AM NOT STIFF.

QUESTION: WE COULD TELL YOU PRIVATELY HOW HE SAID HE FEELS. (LAUGHTER)

THE PRESIDENT: I WILL PROBABLY GO ON TO THE FARM LATER ON TODAY.

THE PRESS: THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT.

END TEXT. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, PRESS SUMMARIES, MEETINGS, RESOLUTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 09-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE187018
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: HCOLLUMS:TH
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770285-0628
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770881/aaaacqjf.tel
Line Count: 166
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c275635f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1661526
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT'S REMARKS ON PALESTINIANS
TAGS: PFOR, US, XF, PLO, (CARTER, JIMMY)
To: AMMAN CAIRO MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c275635f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009